

## HOW THE COMMONWEALTH EDISON STINGS THE PEOPLE WITH HIGH PRICES

Why can't the women of Chicago have cheap electric current for housekeeping?

Why does it cost so much to do your cooking by electricity?

And why does it cost so much to do your laundry work in the basement with electric machinery?

Everybody knows the electric way is the best and quickest way. Why does it cost so much?

Well, Morton L. Johnson, president of the Penny Phone league, says you will find the answer in a petition filed before the public utilities commission yesterday by Stedman & Soelke, attorneys for the league.

"Every woman who wants more electric service in her house, but stops because the cost is high, should know that the Commonwealth Edison Co. charges just about twice as much as the law says they can charge," said Johnson.

"For cooking and washing, there is nothing more handy and labor-saving about the house than electric current and modern machines. There is only one reason the price of electric current is not cheaper and that is because Samuel Insull and the Commonwealth Edison Co. have cornered the market, got a monopoly and are selling electric current at nearly twice what it's worth, allowing them 7 per cent interest on their actual investment."

The petition filed yesterday says net valuation of the C. E. & Co. is \$23,000,000. Earnings on this last year were \$2,905,098. This is too much. And it's more than the utilities law says they have a right to, the petition recites. Instead of \$2,905,098, it should have been \$1,610,000. That would be 7 per cent, the correct legal amount, above depreciation, operating expenses and all other expenditures. This figuring permits payment for interest on

bonds and takes into account all such financial expense.

The company collected \$10,500,000 from Chicago people for electrical energy alone. On this gross profits were 73 per cent, it is stated, and therefore the rates of the company are "unjust, unreasonable, unlawful, and a violation of the state utilities act."

"The charge of 10 cents per kilowatt hour could be split in two and there would still be profits running into the millions for Mr. Insull and the bankers and financiers associated with him," said Seymour Stedman.

"Why should the housekeepers of Chicago pay 10 cents an hour for electric current when the Commonwealth Edison Co. sells the same sort of current to the surface and elevated lines for 2 cents an hour? Of course, the distribution cost to the surface and elevated lines is lower and there is less wiring and other apparatus needed. But that won't cover the difference between 2 cents and 10 cents.

"The fact that Samuel Insull is head of the elevated roads collateral trust at the same time he is head of the Edison Co. partly explains the game.

"If the people of Chicago owned the whole electrical system and sold current at cost, I believe the cost would be much under 5 cents per kilowatt hour and perhaps close to 2 cents an hour."

The petition asks that the utilities commission reduce the rates.

Daniel Hurley, 19, Lincoln, Ill., accused of murder of Catherine Holler, who died from poison after buggy ride, engaged counsel and refused to talk.

Joseph Ryder, proprietor Chicago hotel, 22 S. Clark st., missing with a large sum of money. Police asked to search.